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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 000324

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STATE ALSO PASS USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL EAID SOCI DJ

SUBJECT: OPENING OF MEDEHO AND ALAILI DADDA HEALTH FACILITIES

¶1. (U) Official ceremonies were held March 29 and 30 in the rural communities of Alaili Dadda and Medeho, located in the northern district of Obock, to open two health facilities newly renovated under USAID auspices. Both facilities had been completely neglected since originally constructed, and had suffered tremendous damage during the civil war, taking direct impacts from mortars and other explosive devices. Now these rural clinics are completely rehabilitated and ready to begin receiving patients. Eight other clinics will undergo rehabilitation starting near the end of April.

¶2. (U) A delegation, which included the Minister of Health, Obock District Commissioner, USAID Senior Health Advisor and USAID Health Sector Reform Project Team headed by the Chief of Party, inaugurated the Alaili Dadda and Medeho projects. Large crowds were on hand for both events, and included most of the community and a Djiboutian military detachment from Obock city. The Djiboutian media covered both events. USAID Senior Health Advisor, on behalf of the American people, thanked the Ministry of Health and the respective communities for their effort to complete the rehabilitation of these clinics ahead of schedule. He encouraged community members to bring women and children to begin receiving services.

¶3. (U) In his turn, the Minister of Health thanked the US government and USAID for their financing and involvement in the renovation of the two rural clinics, saying that they would provide better access to health services for the most vulnerable people in these communities. The ribbon-cutting ceremonies were followed by a brief tour of the facilities and neighboring houses, which will be occupied by head nurses in each community. The contractors for the rehabilitation did an excellent job, utilizing partitions between sections, offering the head nurses in each clinic consultation rooms as well as examination rooms. Additionally, a maternity section was added to each facility, which previously did not exist. Solar panels were ordered but not yet installed and water reservoirs and sanitation systems are now functioning. Head nurses in both clinics will soon participate in continuing education and refresher training at the district level. The training courses are being planned as a next step in USAID Djibouti's health sector reform project. District trainers, who were recently trained in the capital during the "training of trainers" short-course, are working to start training sessions by mid-April.

¶4. (U) Comment: Work done to complete both of these facilities ahead of schedule was phenomenal when one considers the difficult conditions of both sites. Both communities are remote and accessible only by traveling on very bad roads. The road to Medeho, although only one hour and ten minutes drive from the district capital, was a treacherous climb up and down mountains, covered with large boulders, and composed of narrow turns and precipitous slopes. The encouraging note is that even in these remote areas materials and supplies were delivered in a timely manner during the renovation. We will work with the government of Djibouti to assure the capacity to deliver medical supplies to the facilities in a timely manner. End comment.

RAGSDALE